

King's Highway  
Woodbridge Vicinity, Prince William County  
Virginia

HABS No. VA-579

HABS  
VA  
76. Wood.V.  
3-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Washington 25, D. C.

King's Highway  
Prince William County  
Woodbridge Vicinity

HABS No. VA-579

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VA

Th. Wood

King's Highway

Present Owner: Abandoned

Present Occupant and Use: Abandoned

Description: Narrow roadway bordered by hedgerows, extending from ferry landing opposite Colchester for several hundred yards to Belmont Subdivision. This early north-south highway can be picked up intermittently as far south as Rippon Lodge. It roughly parallels present U. S. Route One and probably was used fairly recently or until the advent of good roads. The roadbed stands as a ridge across open fields except where bulldozers are steadily nibbling it away during building operations for an adjoining housing development. Built as a colonial post road linking the northern and southern colonies. Peter Jefferson and Joshua Fry's Map of 1775 graphically sets forth main highways throughout Virginia, with parts of Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, and North Carolina.

Historical Data:

George Washington frequently travelled this route. In 1791 he met with near-catastrophe in crossing the ferry at Colchester. Here is his account of the accident as related in his diary under date of April 7. "In attempting to cross the ferry at Colchester with the four horses hitched to the chariot by the neglect of the person who stood before them, one of the leaders got overboard when the boat was in swimming water and 50 yards from the shore - with much difficulty he escaped drowning before he could be disengaged. His struggling frightened the others in such a manner that one after another and in quick succession they all got overboard harnessed and fastened as they were and with the utmost difficulty they were saved and the carriage escaped being dragged after them, as the whole of it happened in swimming water and at a distance from the shore. Providentially - indeed miraculously - by the exertions of people who went off in boats and jumped into the river as soon as the batteau was forced into wading water - no damage was sustained by the horses, carriage or harness."

References:

John C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), Diaries of George Washington,  
Boston and New York, 1925, 4 vols.

Prepared by: Russell Jones and Worth Bailey, HABS, National Park  
Service, April, 1959.

Approved:

*Dick Sutton*

Date

*7/9/59*

Chief Architect